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SPEECH

OF

JOSEPH HOLT,

DELIVERED AT A

DEMOCRATIC MEETING HELD AT THE COURT HOUSE,

IN THE CITY OF LOUISVILLE,

ON THE EVENING OF THE 19TH OF OCTOBER, 1852.

LOUISVILLE:

HARNEY & HUGHES, PRINTERS, DEMOCRAT BUILDINGS.

1853.

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S P E E C H .

After a few introductory remarks, Mr. Holt continued as follows:—

FELLOW CITIZENS:—In the observations, necessarily somewhat desultory, which I may have the honor of submitting to your consideration to-night, it will be my endeavor to confine myself to a discussion of what I conceive to be the true issues which have been for years, and I verily believe are still pending between the two great political parties—discarding all personalities, as unworthy of entering into the controversy. And to such of our Whig friends as have paid us the compliment of being present on this occasion, I would say, in all frankness, that whatever of criticism or of denunciation may escape me, must find its interpretation in reference to *principles*, not men. To the Whigs, as a party, I unhesitatingly accord integrity and patriotism—nothing doubting but that they cherish their principles as sincerely as do I my convictions of the disastrous consequences to which those principles, if pursued, must ultimately lead.

At the threshold, I must be permitted to say—which I do in no unkind or invidious spirit—that the Whigs have sought (and it is to be feared, but too successfully) to make the present canvass for the presidency, strictly personal in its character—thus concealing from the public eye, the real principles which are bound up with it, and which must abide its results. Hence their orators, so far at least as they have fallen under my notice, generally begin their speeches by relating a large number of very small and very stale jokes, upon the fall of General Pierce from his horse during the Mexican campaign, and immediately thereafter, they shoot forth, like so many blazing rockets into the heaven of heavens of oratory, in glorification of the military exploits of General Scott. This, so far as I can gather it, is about the sum total of the argument—just as though the American people could be induced to decide the great and absorbing question of the Presidency of the Republic, upon grounds like these? If I do not follow the course thus indicated, of personal adulation on the one hand, and personal crimination on the other, it will be, first, because I have no taste for such things, and secondly, because, having entire confidence in the strength of our *principles*, and in the capacity of the people to understand and appreciate them, I, for one am willing, and desire that the canvass, shall proceed and be determined upon these principles—whose fate it involves—and upon them only.

As far back as the light of history or tradition conducts us, two great political parties have been found to exist in all ages and countries, claiming to be at all civilized. These parties stand out from the pages of history, as distinctly and boldly as do any mountain peaks from the undulating plains on which they cast their shadows. They are, in their nature and mission, essentially antagonistic; and

though their names have changed with the tastes, the caprice or the necessities of the times, and their forms have been modified by the pressure of surrounding circumstances, yet the animating temper and purpose of each, have ever remained the same. The one is the party devoted to power—the other, the party devoted to the people. The one responds to the Conservatism of the nineteenth century—the other, to its Democracy. The one is based upon a distrust of the popular intelligence and integrity, and a shrinking dread of the popular power; the other rests upon an abiding faith in the head and heart of the laboring masses of mankind, whose toil and spirit make up this world's wealth and glory—a conviction, that these masses have the right to regulate their own destiny, and a sublime trust, that though delayed by the fraud and violence of tyrants, the day of their deliverance must ultimately come. The one party has ever resisted all change, all amelioration in the field of politics, and often, of mere literature and science; has striven unceasingly to aggrandize the government, and arm it with yet more absolute powers. This end it has effected, sometimes by an open resort to arms, and sometimes by corrupt perversions of existing charters and compacts. Again, by the imposition of enormous burdens, and by cutting off all sources of information from the people, the masses have fallen an easy prey to the usurper, because thus rendered impoverished, ignorant and brutalized.

The Democratic party, on the other hand, have insisted and insist, that all government is, at best, but a necessary evil, and that, as a general rule, that nation is the best governed which is governed the least; that all political power should be delegated with caution and watched with unsleeping jealousy; that all charters and constitutions in which such delegation is made, should be strictly construed, and that those powers which are not conferred by the letter, but are only to be wrung from the instrument by implication, should not be exercised.

The conservative party have sought their aims, not merely by an appeal to arms, by perversions of the fundamental laws, and by the slow, yet certain process of demoralization, but also by laboring to captivate the imaginations of men, and by weakening and finally extinguishing all sense of personal consequence. Hence they have surrounded the government with the pomp of vast armies; its high functionaries have dwelt in gorgeous palaces; its cities have been filled with monuments; its liveried officials have swarmed in the streets and upon the highways, (as in France, where there is an officer of state for every twenty souls,) its presence and multiplied agencies have been rendered ubiquitous; it has presided in the churches, at the theatres and at all the public amusements of the people—in a word, it has in a thousand ways, with more than the eyes of Argus, and more than the hands of

Briareus, sought to intermingle its insolent offices with the affairs of social and private life. Men, thus perpetually overshadowed by this colossal power, and dazzled by its splendor, seem to themselves, in time, to breathe through the lungs of the government, and exist, as it were, by its very courtesy. A conviction of helplessness creeps over them, and that self-trust, which is the element of all that is truly great in our nature, being gradually frittered away, they sink in appearance, as in fact, into mere motes floating in the sunbeams of political authority. In Europe, where Conservatism is almost universally in the ascendant, nothing strikes the American traveler so promptly and so painfully, as the sense of personal dependance and personal insignificance, which everywhere prevails. This state of things is yet more lamentably apparent among the great minds of the Old World. The statesmen, philosophers, civilians and giants in the fields of literature, who in this country, animated by a lofty self-respect and a noble thirst of fame, would be building for themselves imperishable monuments of renown, are there, but crawling, creeping parasites—devoting their lives and energies to the interests of a few debauched men and women, who claim that their feet were fashioned of God, to tread upon the necks of mankind.

The Democracy, assuming the opposite ground, contend that all government should be simple in its forms and administration; that it should be invisible, except when invoked to protect the weak against the strong—the right against the wrong—that it should be without vast standing armies, or palaces, or espionage upon private or social life; that its glory should consist in the nurture of personal sagacity, and enterprise, and consequence—in the strengthening of personal virtues, and exaltation of personal character—in the development of all those qualities, which throw around the career of man, when freed from artificial and brutalizing restraints, so much that is beautiful and grand. Those are the monuments, in which the government should make its boast—not those of senseless piles of marble scattered over the European continent, inscribed with fulsome falsehoods, and on each of which have been wasted treasures, which distributed, would have made bright and happy a thousand humble homes.

These parties being, as I have said, essentially antagonistic, the conflict between them has ever been maintained—often upon the battle-field—sometimes in the popular assemblies—through the press and in the schools of philosophy; and when driven from all these theatres of human thought and action, the Democratic faith has still lingered, humbly, but in hope, in the bosoms of the lovers of their land and of their race. Its greatest triumph—unparalleled in its annals, for its completeness and splendor—was in the issues of the American Revolution, and the organization of our present constitutional form of government. So powerful were the guarantees thus furnished for popular rights, that it might have been well anticipated that the party of power would disappear forever from our shores. Not so. It came forth at once upon the political arena, and displayed those traits, for which it has been distinguished through every

period of its history. Clamorously urging, as it ever does, that the government was too weak, and fearing the power of the people, it openly assailed the fundamental principles of our institutions. The party assumed the name of *Federalists*, and through its instrumentality, our prisons were for a time hallowed by the presence of martyrs to the freedom of speech and of the press. Expelled from place, by the election of Mr. Jefferson, we meet this party again in the halls of Congress, denouncing the war, and sympathising more with the English constitution than with that of our Republic. Yet again, we find the same party, under a new name—that of National Republicans—during the administration of John Quincy Adams.—Profiting, however, by its past experience, and lowering its tone, it no longer attacks, for the moment, the freedom of speech or of the press, but forms a gigantic system of measures, recommended by plausible and patriotic pretences, which, though slow in their operation, were sure in the end, to reach the same results, for which this party has ever toiled. Baffled once more by the election of General Jackson, the National Republicans “shuffled off,” in obedience to the command of their great leader, not their “mortal coil” but their name, and adopted that of *Whigs*—a name doubtless chosen as a bait to popular credulity, because consecrated in our fatherland, by its association with much that is renowned in the struggle for human rights. But names are not things, as we shall have occasion to see. It will now be my endeavor by a rapid examination of the prominent measures of the Whig party, to show that, though modified in temper and tactics, by the “body of the times,” and the peculiar institutions of our country, yet that it is in very deed the Party of Power, whose characteristics I have attempted to sketch—that it is animated by its aggressive, centralising spirit, and that as such, it devolves upon us, as a duty of patriotism, to resist it.

Among the boldest and most memorable of these measures, may be enumerated; a National Bank; a system of Internal Improvements by the Federal Government; a high Protective Tariff; and hostility to the Veto power; as conferred by the constitution.

You all remember something of the character of the Bank of the United States, and of the obstinate and angry contest, which resulted in its overthrow. I remember it right well; and, in my humble judgment, that great Chieftain, General Jackson, did not strike a more glorious blow for his country, when at the battle of New Orleans, he smote the British lion in the face, and drove him howling from our shores, than he did, when he grappled with and trampled to the earth, this political and financial monster. You must well recollect, in what an odour of sanctity, this institution had managed to enshrine itself with the American people—so much so, that when General Jackson breathed the first suspicion of its integrity, and threw out the first intimation that its charter should not be renewed, the National Republican party in mass held up their hands in holy horror, while he was denounced as a calumniator and a miscreant, as though he had slandered pure and helpless wo-

man herself! But the old Chief's vision went a little beyond the surface of things; and when in the night of his mission he laid his hand upon that whited sepulchre, and tore away its covering, it was found to be filled with something worse than 'rottenness and dead men's bones.' The stench of its fathomless iniquities, has not yet died in the public nostrils. It grew like the Banyan tree, and as its branches, spreading in all directions, touched the earth, they took root—took root in the cupidity and corruptibility of men. When the question of its re-charter was moved, humble as had been its beginnings, and brief as had been its existence, it was found to have become already, as it were, a tower in the state. It openly took the field against the government and the people—scattering its largesses broad-cast—and (passing strange to tell,) statesmen and orators, who had held wondering multitudes and listening senates entranced by their eloquence, while they demonstrated the unconstitutionality, and denounced the pernicious tendencies of this institution, were now found transformed into faithful attorneys and zealous champions, under whose advocacy, it proved, indeed, more difficult to subdue, than 'an army with banners.' Like a Boa, it had wound itself around and around the entire body and limbs of the commercial and monied classes—toying with and caressing them to-day, and crushing them in its venomous folds to-morrow. These classes were heard, at one moment singing hosannas to it, as to their temporal saviour, while at another, they were seen standing before it, stricken and cowering, as in the presence of an avenging Deity. They gathered tremblingly around its portals, and if they did not lay their bodies, they did their souls, in the dust before it, and shouted, if not from their lips, certainly from the depths of their hearts, in the abject language of oriental adulation—"O! Bank, live forever." The picture is not overdrawn. Those who recall the terrific scenes of agitation, alarm and suffering through which this country then passed, when the very heart-strings of the nation, night and morn, were played upon by the felon fingers of this almost demoniac institution, will say that in nothing do I exaggerate. The authority to charter a National Bank, the Democratic party hold to be no where granted by the Constitution; and even if such authority were conferred, as the institution has proved to be one of the deadliest foes to the purity of the elective franchise, ever known in this country, we maintain that it would have been unwise and unpatriotic, to re-establish it. The power must be conceded by all, to be one of, at least a doubtful character. Mr. Clay, in one of the most vigorous and luminous arguments of his life—an argument clothed with the noon-day splendors of an eloquence which time had not chilled or dimmed—pronounced it to be "a vagabond power," which had wandered from one end of the Constitution to the other, and had found no resting place. Yet this institution has ever been a darling of the Whig party, and its restoration is one of its favorite schemes—especially is it a favorite scheme with General Scott, the Whig nominee for the Presidency, as disclosed in his letter of the 25th of October, 1841. It is true, that no mention of it is made in the Whig

platform, as set forth at Baltimore—but for very obvious reasons. That platform was framed with reference to its availability, as was chosen the candidate under it; hence this and other offensive measures, so often voted down by the people at the polls, have been adroitly omitted. But though omitted for the purposes of this canvass, rest assured, that it has never been abandoned. In proof of this, I need but remind you, that the last moment the whigs had the majority in Congress, and were able to carry through their cherished schemes, was during the administration of John Tyler, and that they signalled that epoch, by the passage of a bill chartering a National Bank, which, but for the Veto of the President—to whom he immortal honor for it—would, with all its corruptions and despotism, be now tyrannizing over our country.—And there can be no better evidence of what a political idol, a National Bank is with the Whigs, than the intense rancour and calumny with which, from that hour to this, that they have pursued the administration and fame of President Tyler. In nothing had he offended save this, yet unto this very moment, his name is never taken upon the lips of whig orators, nor admitted into the columns of whig journals, but in connection with obloquy and execration.

In supporting this institution, the Whigs are true to their instincts and mission, as the Party of Power. It trends down the constitution, and while increasing overwhelmingly the volume of governmental influence, it substitutes for that popular virtue and intelligence, in which the Party of Power have never had confidence, an instrumentality of political rule, probably the most potent and certainly the most unscrupulous, which our country has ever known.

The next favorite scheme with the Whigs, is a system of Internal Improvements by the General Government. These improvements, according to the system as framed and insisted upon, were to extend, not merely to our harbors and rivers and great thoroughfares, but were to be made at the discretion of the Federal authorities. They were to pervade every state and county and neighborhood in the Union, and the glittering bait would, in the end, have been laid at the door of almost every dwelling in the land. The system once begun, its progress would have been wholly irresistible. It would indeed have been as the letting out of waters—as the opening of a crevasse in one of the levees of the Mississippi—every day and hour of its existence, would have deepened and darkened the flow of the current and widened the spread of the inundation. You all must well know, how measures under such systems, are swept through legislative bodies. They move as vast snow-balls, gathering as they go—every project of every member, the great and small, the important and the insignificant, being thrown into one heap, and cohering together only by a common sentiment of plunder. Under the operations of such a system, the National Treasury would long since have been bankrupted ten times over; but this would have been the least deplorable result. The Federal legislature, and with it, vast masses of our countrymen, would have been utterly de-

moralized. The employees of the General Government, of every grade—and the links of the chain would have been infinite—would have swarmed along our rivers, creeks, highways and by-ways, until every road to mill and to meeting, would have been shadowed by their presence and strewn with their corrupting largesses. You might as well attempt to unseat the eternal Andes, as to dislodge a party from power, armed with a patronage like this. Its armies of hirelings and dependants, bought and debased like the people of Europe, with their own money, would, at the bidding of the Government, have swept the polls as an avalanche, and who could have resisted them? General Jackson met this gigantic system at the threshold and arrested its onward progress, by his Veto upon the Lexington and Maysville road—a highway in no respect national, but serving merely to connect two of the smaller towns of Kentucky. In his message returning the bill to Congress, he laid down the doctrine to which the Democratic party have ever since adhered—that such improvements, unless strictly national in their character, cannot be legitimately made by the Federal Government. For this, the Whig journals, during his administration, and indeed while he lived, continued to heap upon him mountains of reproach. In this scheme, we have disclosed yet more boldly, the distinguishing characteristics of the Party of Power. Here is laid bare, until its palpitations meet the eye, the ardent desire ever cherished by that party, to aggrandize the Government at the expense of the Constitution, to render it overshadowing in its magnificence, and ultimately unlimited in its authority—thus introducing into our system, a venal and fearfully powerful instrumentality of government, not based upon the virtue or intelligence of the people, but upon sordid, despicable appeals to their avarice and to their local prejudices. Yet this, in the estimation of the Whigs, is the grandest pillar in the temple of the American system; and although again and again overthrown by the vote of the people, the fanatics of the party may still be seen watering its base with their tears and throwing their arms wildly around its shattered shaft.

The Democrats insist that all these improvements, save the class designated, should be left to the states, or (which in the majority of cases would be still better) to individual sagacity and enterprise. They would then be well made, cheaply made, and there would be no demoralization on the one hand or on the other.

In passing, I must notice in this connection, an attempt to modify the Whig creed on this point, as exhibited in the construction of their late Baltimore Platform. The framers of that instrument, in issuing what claims to be the "last edition" of the Whig faith, in contempt of all the antecedents of the party, have declared that the improvements made by the Federal Government should "in every instance be national and general in their character." Verily this announcement must have sounded strangely, in the dying ears of the Father of the American system—the daring and unsparing leader of the remorseless crusade against General Jackson, for having vetoed an appropriation to

the petty road connecting Maysville and Lexington. It may be safely affirmed that this modification, which now sees the light for the first time, is altogether without authority. When we wish to know what the Whig creed is, we naturally look to the history of the Whig party; to its action while in power; to the messages of its Presidents; the speeches and votes of its leaders in Congress; the language of its most distinguished journals; and in view of all these, I do not hesitate to assert, that this resolution does not present the Whig faith, as it has ever been manifested, in its many and sore conflicts with the Democracy of the nation. It is a clap-trap modification made to meet the exigencies of the present canvass—a ladder destined to be kicked away, the moment it has been mounted. Who elected the Whig National Convention, and who are bound by their action? Nobody! That assemblage rose up as a mist of the morning, and like that mist, it has disappeared. If in after years, that party should come into power, and this resolution should be quoted to arrest the progress of a system of Internal Improvements without limitation by the General Government, the reference would serve but to excite the sneers and laughter of Whig statesmen. Who, they would jeeringly ask, authorized the Baltimore convention to change the Whig confession of faith, which, like the law of the Medes and the Persians, altereth not? And who could answer that question?

The Whig party advocate now, as ever, a high protective Tariff. This advocacy has, in part, for its foundation, one of the strangest delusions that ever laid hold upon the mind of man. It is this: that the true test of the prosperity of a nation, so far as its foreign commerce is concerned, is the proportion in which its exports exceed its imports. If, during the current year, this country should export to the value of one hundred millions of the products of its industry, which, on arriving abroad, should be sold for one hundred and twenty millions, and this sum should be invested in foreign merchandise, which, on reaching our shores, should be found to be worth one hundred and forty millions, the nation, according to this doctrine, would have lost forty millions—being the excess of imports, and would be going at rail-road speed to ruin. Strange to tell, many an elaborate page of political economy has been written in support of this error. It was distinctly recognised by J. Q. Adams in his fourth annual message, wherein he holds this language: "It is indeed, a general law of prosperous commerce, that the real value of exports should by a small and only a small balance, exceed that of imports, that balance being a *permanent addition to the wealth of the nation.*" If a "small balance" could thus add to "the permanent wealth of the nation," a great balance, it is sufficiently clear, would necessarily make a correspondingly great addition to the national wealth! The "old man eloquent" doubtless died, a thorough believer in the proposition which he thus announced—a sad illustration of the enslaving power of the past, over some of the greatest intellects which the world has produced. As a corollary from the position assumed, the higher the tariff, the more cer-

tainly the amount of imports would be diminished, the excess of exports increased, and consequently the prosperity of the country, in the same ratio advanced—just as though it were possible for foreign nations to buy our products, unless we bought theirs in return. This constitutes one of the foundations on which the High Tariff system rests.

Another ground upon which this system is advocated, is the patriotic pretence, that it is necessary for the American people to be independent of all other nations, in all things—in humble imitation, I suppose, of the Japanese, from whom the Whigs may have borrowed this magnificent conception. To this end it follows, that they should manufacture all articles of which they stand in need, even though the process should cost them double and treble the sum, for which these articles could be purchased abroad. Here the Party of Power, the pseudo aristocrats of the world, condescend to play the demagogue.

The true ground, however, of the advocacy of this system is, that it furnishes through its subsidies, a vast power to the government unknown to the constitution, and builds up a numerous class, privileged above all others—enriched, exalted and almost ennobled, at the cost of the toiling masses of mankind around them. The members of this class, would have multiplied thousands in their employment; these operatives must depend for their daily bread upon the pleasure of their employers, who even now, in the infancy of these establishments, drive them to the polls, almost as cattle are driven over the fields. 'If these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?'

The Democratic doctrine is: no monopoly, but protection alike to every class, guarding if possible with anxious care, the *independence of all*. If, as some political writers insist, these gigantic manufactories, with their attendant curses of demoralization and servitude, are the legitimate fruits of a dense population, let us at least not hasten the advent of an era in our history so dark and deplorable, by artificial means. Let us not force, in our hot-houses, the growth of the Upas, as though it were a flower of matchless beauty or a shrub of aromatic odour.

In the three measures to which I have adverted, there is glaringly manifested the dominant spirit of whigery—a desire on all occasions, by the most latitudinians, I had almost said by the wildest construction, to add to the power of the Government. That set of politicians would wring power from this tortured instrument, as you would wring water from a sponge. And here we meet our adversaries face to face, and glory in the position maintained by the Democratic party, of a rigid, unshrinking adherence, under all circumstances of pressure without and of pressure without, to the *letter* of that great charter of liberty. There is safety in nothing else. It is the break-water which protects the tranquil haven of social and political rights, from the waves and the tempests which rage without. If the Whig party, judging from the past, could have the ascendancy for fifty years, they would overwhelm the constitution of the Union be-

neath a mountain of constructions, perversions and commentaries, just as the Jews have buried their scriptures, beneath the traditions of the Talmud. The sentiment of profound veneration for written constitutions, is a sentiment altogether American; it is unknown elsewhere in the world. Look at the people of France, certainly the most polished and possibly the most intellectual of nations; yet during the existence of their recent short-lived republic, the language of their statesmen and journalists shows, that they had no more regard for their constitution, although adopted with all the forms and ceremonies which distinguished the adoption of our own, than they had for an act of ordinary legislation. You know the result. Let us then cherish this deep veneration, and exalt it, if possible, into a religious sentiment. But be assured, that just in proportion as you become accustomed to the continual violations of that instrument, to the continual exercise of doubtful powers wrung from it, and to the daily multiplication of those powers, will you weaken and finally extinguish in your bosoms the sentiment to which I have referred. If you would guard your constitution in all its strength and in all its purity, it should be hedged about in your hearts, as was hedged Mount Sinai, when it quaked and smoked and burned beneath the presence of the descended Deity. None should be allowed to approach its flaming borders, and live.

Such, however, is not the feeling of the Whigs. They have openly assailed and would sweep away, as would their candidate for the Presidency, one of the strongest bulwarks which the wisdom of our Fathers has erected for the protection of the constitution—I allude, of course, to the Veto power. Gen. Scott, in his letter of 25th October, 1841, says: "I hope by an early amendment of the constitution, to see a reduction of the President's veto"—and such is the hope of the party who have selected him for their standard bearer in the present contest. For myself, it must be confessed, that I love the Veto power—first for its origin.—You remember, when the laboring masses of Rome, who enjoyed but little share in the government, were oppressed beyond endurance by the upper classes, they retired to Mount Sacer, in open revolt, and refused to return until their grievances were redressed and a sufficient guarantee given for their future protection. The result was the appointment of several officers, called Tribunes, who represented the people, and by whom, all laws affecting popular rights, were to be approved, before they could be carried into execution. If the Tribune regarded the measure proposed, as encroaching upon the freedom or interests of the people, he responded in the language of that day: "Veto," i. e. I forbid, and the measure fell to the ground.—This is the origin of the Veto power, and it is endeared to me, because associated with one of the grandest movements in behalf of popular rights, which history has recorded. The President of the United States is the Tribune of the American people.

I love this power also, because of what it has accomplished for the country in moments of greatest peril to the Republic. During the administra-

tions of Jackson, Tyler and Polk, it is well known that its exercise, and that only, saved the land from the scourge of a National Bank, and from the cankering curse of that system of Internal Improvements, upon which I have commented. Our government, you perfectly understand, is one of checks and balances, and in this, consists its beauty, its strength and its superiority over all the governments which have preceded it. The patriots who framed it, threw around the constitution—justly regarded as the Palladium of all our political blessings—three distinct walls. First, beginning with the outer—are the two Houses of Congress; next is the President, armed with the Veto power, and lastly, is the Judiciary. Over all these walls a breach must be made, before the constitution can be successfully invaded. But the experience of our country proves, that, of these three walls, the outer is most accessible and least to be relied on.—Bill after bill, most flagrantly unconstitutional, has been carried through Congress, and it has devolved upon the President in the exercise of his sworn duty, to arrest them. Why it is so, it were perhaps needless here to inquire. It may be, because, finding as we do, that the fidelity of public servants is generally proportioned to their sense of responsibility, as this responsibility is divided, so the force of its consciousness is correspondingly diminished. A mob will commit outrages, which no single member of it, would dare attempt; so a legislative body will sometimes enact laws under the same feeling, which no one member unsupported, would have the hardihood to urge upon the country. In the President, who stands *alone*, we have a concentration of the highest sense of responsibility—and the history of our institutions shows, that with him too, has been found the highest measure of fidelity. In wielding this power, against which the Whigs have sought to excite so much jealousy, he acts, not as Queen Victoria or as any other foreign Prince or Potentate would do. He acts not for himself, nor his family nor his caste, but for and as the agent of the people, by whom he is chosen, and to whom he is directly responsible. When under the influence of profligate combinations, or passion or panic, the outer wall gives way, and the storm and the billow are sweeping madly on, the President takes his stand, and in the name and strength, and clothed with the majesty of the American people, he says to that storm, “be still,” and to that billow, “thus far shalt thou go and no further.” Again and again, that voice has been heard in the hour of darkness and of threatened national disaster, and again and again the wild wave has rolled back at its bidding, baffled and broken, and the sunlight of peace and safety has again bathed the turrets of our blessed constitution. Who is here that would tear this power from our Chief Magistrate, our faithful representative, and fling the charter of our liberties beneath the feet of a reckless, passion-led majority of Congress?

There are those who think the Whigs are opposed to the Veto power, merely because it has been exercised by Democratic Presidents, and in arrest of favorite Whig measures. Not so. That hostility has yet a deeper foundation. Ours is a government,

I have said, of checks and balances—a most embarrassing and inconvenient form of government, for the Party of Power. Of the outer check or wall, they have no dread, having again and again, at will overleaped it. Could they but succeed in destroying the second wall—the Veto power—the third and last, the Judiciary—confessedly the weakest branch of the system—would soon follow; and then the Party of Power would have, what they have ever labored for—a government absolute, with no restraint upon the caprice, the interest, the passion, or the dark ambition of the hour.

We are often told, in bland and coaxing tones, by whig journalists and orators, that there is no longer any real difference between the principles of the two political parties now struggling for mastery; and that as the public services and abilities of General Scott far exceed those of General Pierce—such is their assumption—the former should be sustained by even Democratic suffrages. Without pausing to measure the width and depth of the gulf impassable, which separates us from our political adversaries, I will state that I should be most happy to have pointed out to me, in any authorised edition ever issued of the Whig faith, or in any of the phases through which the trans-migratory spirit of that party has ever passed, aught, at all analogous to those resolutions of the Democratic platform, which declare that “Congress has no power to charter a National Bank,” and “that such an institution is of deadly hostility to the best interests of the country”—that “justice and sound policy forbid the Federal Government to foster one branch of industry, to the detriment of any other”—“that the proceeds of the public lands ought to be applied to the objects specified in the constitution, and not distributed among the States”—“that the Veto power as given by the constitution, should be maintained,”—and that “the constitution does not confer upon the General Government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements.” But especially should I rejoice to find in the past of that party, something in harmony with the following Democratic resolution:

Resolved, That the war with Mexico, upon all the principles of patriotism and the law of nations, was a just and necessary war on our part, in which every American should have shown himself on the side of his country, and neither morally nor physically, by word or deed, have given “aid and comfort to the enemy.”

We would not wantonly play the resurrectionist, and cause the deeds of our Whig friends to pass as

“A slovenly, unhandsome corpse,
Between the wind and their nobility.”

yet it must be endured, that the Democratic party shall refer with pride and pleasure, to the part which they and their leaders played in that eventful drama. It is profitable and just too, on the other hand, to remember the obstinate and bitter opposition which the whigs, as a party, offered to the Mexican war. The history of popular governments shows that such a course of conduct, is never forgotten by the people. There is in my mind’s

eye, a striking illustration of this fact. When our country, by sea and land, was engaged in a conflict with a powerful and atrocious foe, when defeat had followed on defeat, until every patriotic bosom was chilled, and every patriotic fireside was covered with gloom, there rose up in the Halls of Congress, one of the most gifted of her statesmen—but he rose there, not to counsel his countrymen with his wisdom, nor to comfort or animate them by his great eloquence—he rose to mock and to sneer! It is lamentably true; and from that hour his countrymen shrank from him, and, although for many years gone by, he has labored zealously in behalf of the Constitution and the Union, and those labors have excited the admiration and the gratitude of all, yet, unto this moment, he remains unforgiven. His fame and intellect tower before us, colossal in their proportions, but mournful in their isolation, as some pyramid rising amid desert sands. Over the arid waste that thus encircles him, there flows no current, there trickles no drop of the popular sympathy. So it must ever be. All other offences can be pardoned by the people, save this. Let the public man ridicule and denounce his country, her measures and her statesmen, if he will, in the *sunny hour of her prosperity*, but when her children's blood is flowing upon her battle fields, and darkness and disaster have fallen upon her arms, he who then stands up in her councils with words of mocking and contempt upon his lips, hath written for himself a doom, which centuries of after patriotic labor, will not suffice to reverse. So mote it be! Let young ambition, whether found in Whig or Democratic ranks, look upon the fate of this magnificent but wrecked statesman, and be admonished.

We cannot recall without a blush, the terms in which Whig statesmen and Journalists reprobated that eminently patriotic war. One of them, now a member of the Cabinet, expressed the impious hope, that the Mexicans would "welcome our armies with bloody hands and to hospitable graves"—while a leading Whig journal in Ohio, spoke of Gen. Scott as the "chief Mexican butcher in a land-pirate war." This is but a fair exhibition of the spirit, by which the opposition was characterized. It will be urged in extenuation, that when the clash of arms came, the Whigs were found, side by side with the Democrats, upon the tented field, and in the "red rift of battle." This is not denied. But it is a truth, and not the less so, because announced by a poet, that

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

This is especially true in this age, when there has been erected a tribunal, exalted above all principalities and powers, to which men, and nations and sceptred monarchs, are alike amenable—the tribunal of public opinion. When, therefore, the opposition denounced the Mexican war as unholy and piratical, they unnerved their country in the presence of that tribunal, tarnished the glory of her victories, and thus inflicted upon her a wrong, for which no daring on the battle field could ever atone.

The war, begun and prosecuted by a Democratic administration, closed, and what were its fruits? The national honor was vindicated; another proof was

given of the capability of our institutions to abide the shock of arms; another refutation was afforded of that stale calumny of kings, that great standing armies are alike indispensable for purposes of national defence, and for the successful prosecution of foreign wars; an empire, in point of territory, was added to the Republic; the inexhaustible mines of California have been opened to American enterprise, and the foundations laid of a commerce, destined to gather into its lap, the gorgeous treasures of the Oriental World.

Before examining the claims of General Scott to the high office for which he has been nominated, it is proper that I should pay my respects to President Fillmore. True, he is not a candidate for re-election, but as his administration has been constantly obtruded upon public attention, as embodying pre-eminently the spirit and graces of whiggery, and as, indeed, a very model in its kind, it is altogether permissible, if not incumbent upon me, as such, to speak to it. Of the domestic aspects of that administration, I will say nothing; if evil had been designed—which I am far from charging—the overwhelming Democratic majority in both Houses of Congress, would have prevented it. It is to its foreign policy, over which that majority could exert no perceptible influence, that I would invite your special attention. In treating briefly, as I must do, this branch of our subject, no attempt will be made to inflame your passions, but I shall content myself with the recital of a few well authenticated facts, leaving it for you to draw the proper inferences. You, the people, are emphatically the statesmen of this country, and it devolves upon you, as a duty of patriotism, to think, to feel, and to act up to your proud position. You are the guardians of the national honor, a jewel, which, if left to the care of truckling and trimming politicians, must suffer, be assured, a fate calamitous indeed.

For many years, there has subsisted between Russia and the United States, a treaty stipulating, that citizens of this country shall enjoy the same privilege of entering the Russian Empire, and of traveling and sojourning there, as is enjoyed by Russian subjects, within the territories of our Republic; yet, since the French revolution of 1848, His Majesty, the Emperor, has thought proper to disregard this treaty, and American travelers have been met at the frontier and driven back, as men of infamous principles and of suspected reputation.—Not many months since, Mr. Mann, accredited as United States Charge to the Republic of Switzerland, called at the office of the Russian Embassy at Paris, and with this treaty in his hand, demanded, in pursuance of its provisions, that his passport should be *vised* for St. Petersburg. He was flatly refused, nor did the officer deign to assign any other reason for the refusal, than that such was the will of his Imperial master. It is true, that within the last two years, there has been some relaxation of this insolent rigor, and Americans have been permitted to visit the Russian capital, upon the guarantee of the minister of their country, that they would be of good behavior—a guarantee in all respects analogous to that required every day, in our criminal courts, of loafers, vagabonds and stroll-

ing thieves. It is humiliating to know, that not a few of our fellow-citizens have been found willing, so far to abase themselves, as to comply with this condition. Thus, from month to month, and from year to year, in a point vital to the personal honor of Americans, and insulting, and designed to be so, to their republican principles, has this treaty been trodden under foot, not only with impunity, but without remonstrance and without rebuke.

It may not be unbecoming the occasion, to inquire who the Czar of all the Russias is, and what are the claims which he presents to the extraordinary indulgence with which he has been treated by the present administration of our *republican government*. He furnishes in his person, the purest and most intense illustration of an Asiatic Despot, to be found on this side of the Bosphorus. His dominions spread over about one-seventh of the habitable globe, and he owns, as absolutely as does any farmer in Kentucky the cattle in his fields, some sixty millions of human beings. He asserts it as his high mission, to put down all revolutions, and all popular systems of government; he has decimated Poland, and peopled the wastes and snows of Siberia, with the noblest of her inhabitants; he has crushed struggling and bleeding Hungary, and established everywhere the iron rule of Legitimacy: he has (to borrow a thought from Tacitus) *made Europe a solitude, and says that order reigns*. His system of espionage, is, for its fearful ubiquity, without a parallel in the annals of the worst days of the Roman Empire. No subject, whatever his rank, can leave the Russian territory, without a written permission from the imperial government, specifying the country or countries he is permitted to visit, and how long it is the will of the Czar that he shall be absent, and a default on his part in either of these particulars, is sure to be followed by confiscation and exile. While journeying in Palestine, in the spring of 1851, I made the acquaintance of a Russian gentleman of fine intelligence and education, who was the bearer of one of these permits—"a pass"—to use the American phrase—such as the slaves of the South carry when absenting themselves from their master's plantation. When in the course of our conversation, I spoke of the attractions of various localities which I had embraced in my tour, and urged him to extend his travels to the same points, he replied, that he would be most happy to do so, but that his limited term of absence was drawing to a close, and he had no alternative but to return. A cordon of police stations girdles the empire, vast as it is, so that no one, even with the assent of the proper officials formally obtained, can cross the line, without being met and conducted to one of these stations, where he is subjected to a series of interrogatories, as searching as they are degrading. He is compelled to disclose his name, age and history, whence he cometh and whither he goeth, his business, &c., &c., and all these responses are carefully recorded, together with the size of his mouth and chin, the length of his nose, the breadth of his forehead, and the color of his hair and beard. He is not precisely cropped and branded, as are cattle in this country, but marks are thus put upon him, equally indelible. He is then turned loose, to have his footsteps dogged by a Russian spy, trav-

elling with him, wherever he may go, in the public conveyances, and sitting unknown at his side, at the tables of the hotels and boarding-houses.—This system is not confined in its operations to the empire, but embraces the civilized world. In our own land Russian spies reside, with the rank and pay of military officers, disguised, yet ever active, serving as so many eyes with which the great Embodiment of Despotism, is looking into the heart of the nations.

Such is the man, who, in violation of a solemn treaty, with hands ever red with human slaughter, dares hold up American citizens to public scorn, as unworthy to tread upon Russian soil.

Soon after the French revolution of February, 1848, the electric spark which had exploded in Paris, sped in lightning currents throughout the greater part of Europe, crossed the Alps, and flashing along the Italian coasts, might be seen blazing forth from many a mountain height, in the watch-fires of freedom—fires destined, alas, but too soon, to be quenched in the blood of those by whom they had been kindled. In view of this troubled condition of that portion of the Old World, the present administration issued a special order regulating the conduct of our naval forces in the Mediterranean. What think you was its purport? In the defence of Capt. Long, published in March last, we have cited enough of this extraordinary document, or rather of the general order of Commodore Morgan, based upon it, to know, incredible as it may seem, that *it forbade in the most express terms, the officers and sailors to converse upon their ships or on shore, with each other, or with anybody else, upon the revolutionary or political topics of the day; and further that it forbade them either by word or act, to give any intimation that they sympathised with either of the parties*—those parties being, the people on the one side, and their oppressors on the other. Such was the bearing prescribed for American citizens—whose constitution secures freedom of speech to all—to be observed on our national ships, with the stars and stripes floating at their mast-heads. They were not merely struck dumb, but, by this order, were made to stand on their decks as miserable cataleptics, without power to move a muscle, lest the soul within should betray itself. Was this necessary, think you, to the preservation of our neutrality? It cannot be pretended, apparent as it is to all, that this neutrality could not be violated by mere words, whosoever or by whomsoever spoken. As the wretched inhabitants of that country, naturally looked upon our banner unfurled in their harbors, with the same longing, anxious eyes, with which the desert wanderers of old, gazed upon the pillar of fire that lit up the night of their pilgrimage, methinks that had our officers or sailors met in the streets or lanes of the cities, any of these fugitives pressed by their human hunters, they might have taken them by the hand, or even whispered, "God speed," into their ears, without compromising the dignity or good faith of our government. Not so, thought President Fillmore. But this apprehension of a breach of our neutrality, so ostentatiously put forth, was but a pretence, and a shabby one, at best. The true motive of this discreditable, and I would fain believe, unparalleled

order, was a slavish fear of offending, and a sycophantic desire of winning the smiles of such regal monsters as the King of Naples, who was then pursuing his insurgent subjects as so many wild beasts, and who has since been engaged in driving and herding them by thousands in his loathsome prisons, where even now, amid untold agonies, they are languishing and dying, with no more care for them on his part, than you would have for so many rats shut up in your cellars!

When the frigate *Mississippi*, commanded by Capt. Long, with Gov. Kossuth on board as a national guest, arrived at Marseilles, a crowd of boats came out from the shore filled with enthusiastic Frenchmen, who, gathering about the noble vessel, sent up their cries, not merely in honor of the illustrious Hungarian, but in honor, also, of our own loved land. One of this multitude, more ardent than the rest, drawing nigh to the ship, shouted, "long live the United States," and as the burning words escaped him, he threw a wreath of the flower called the *immortelle*, which fell upon the deck at the feet of the Commander, who, instead of snatching it up and pressing it proudly to his lips, kicked it contemptuously from his presence! Under the stringent order referred to, he felt constrained thus to act, lest he should give "intimation" of "sympathy" with French republicanism. This is one of the "examples," doubtless, by which the whigs propose "to teach the advantages of free institutions" and *our devotion to them!*

The receipt at Paris of the intelligence of General Taylor's death, was immediately followed by a meeting of the Americans resident and sojourning in that city, convened for the purpose of passing the usual resolutions of respect to his memory.—Mr. Rives, the Minister, being absent—as he generally is, when his countrymen are to be met—the Secretary of Legation presided over the meeting. In the progress of the proceedings, a gentleman offered a resolution, declaring that Gen. Taylor, in the simplicity of his public and private life, was a model of the Chief Magistrate of a Republic.—The presiding officer representing the present administration, in apparent trepidation, begged that the resolution might be withdrawn, saying, he was apprehensive it might be deemed a rebuke to the French Government.—Louis Napoleon having even at that early period of his career, surrounded himself with the guilty pageantries of royalty. So earnestly was the request urged, that the mover of the resolution yielded, and thus a body of American citizens, in the office of their own Legation, and, as it were, upon their own soil, were frightened from the assertion of a principle, true in itself, and especially dear to every republican heart.

During the reign of Charles X.—successor in name to Charles IX., infamously memorable for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day—our country was represented, as now, at the court of St. Cloud, by this same Mr. Rives. It is the custom, as known to many of you, for the Americans in Paris, on the arrival of the anniversary of our National Independence, to procure a room, where, having assembled together, they seat themselves around

their table, and in the good old American fashion, amid patriotic toasts and speeches and songs, they recall their far-off homes and live over the blessed memories which cluster as an imperishable aroma around the 4th of July. To this festive board the resident minister from the United States is always invited, and is, indeed, the chief guest. On the occasion of which I speak, an invitation was accordingly extended to Mr. Rives, but he declined attending; and why, think you, was he unwilling to be found in American company on a day so glorious in our history? "Because," said he, "I fear"—an ominous word to be found in the mouth of an American minister on the 4th of July—"I fear my presence will give offence to the French Government"—that government consisting, be it understood, of the aforesaid Charles X., who soon thereafter was chased by his infuriated subjects from the throne, which he, and his ancestors for so many centuries, had polluted by their debaucheries and their crimes. The Saviour of the world once said to his disciples, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven." This is the true test of fidelity; and that free people, by whatever name called, who, through their officials, shrink from an avowal of their principles in the presence of the enemies and revilers of those principles—the spoilers and oppressors of our race—are totally unworthy alike of the respect, of mankind and of the freedom which they enjoy.

I have thus spoken, with no view of arraigning personally Mr. Rives or his Secretary, but have been induced to exhibit their conduct, simply because I regard it as a fair specimen of the bearing of American officials abroad. The simplicity, the manliness, and the glorying in the principles of freedom, which distinguished the earlier days of the Republic, have departed from this class of her representatives. American Envoys, Charges, and Consuls, with few exceptions, now bow as low as the lowest of the abject flatterers who crouch around European thrones, making everywhere, as they do, the impression that, however much the *rabble* of this country may be devoted to republicanism, they themselves, the *elite* and the cultivated, are heartily ashamed of it.

Within the present year, an American merchant ship was fired into by an English man-of-war, off the South American coast. I know not what words were deemed sufficient to atone for this outrage. The circumstance is significant, as indicating how humble must be the prevailing estimate of our national character, when subordinate officers, without any authority from their superiors, feel that they can with impunity, make at pleasure American vessels a target for their guns.

During the difficulties connected with the invasion of Cuba by Lopez and his followers, an American steamer proceeding on her regular voyage, filled with passengers, commanded by a Lieutenant of our Navy, and with the national flag displayed at her mast-head, was fired upon and brought to, upon the high seas, by a petty Spanish vessel of

* This incident is given on the authority of an eyewitness.

† This anecdote is related on the authority of a gentleman long resident in this city, and who, at the time spoken of, was attending the medical lectures in Paris.

war. If any atonement has been made for this, it has not transpired. Falsehood—I would not be so harsh, if without it, I could be truthful—falsehood, I repeat, is an essential element of European diplomacy, and he who is most expert in the use of this weapon, is held to be the greatest diplomatist. Hence those transatlantic Governments do not hesitate, through their minions, to insult ours, and the moment the matter is pressed upon them, they reply, “all a mistake,” “sorry for it”—both of which are false, for it was no mistake, and they rejoice in it, and even while resorting to this paltry subterfuge, they are chuckling in their sleeve, at the large wondering eyes, and half-benevolent, half-stupid face, with which Brother Jonathan is in the habit of receiving these excuses. I do not scruple to affirm, that had General Jackson been at the head of this Government, instead of going, hat in hand, to beg an explanation of the authorities at Madrid, he would have despatched a war steamer in pursuit, and would have returned gun for gun, aye, ten for one, if need be, wherever that insolent Spanish Man-of-war might have been found—be it upon the high seas, or be it in the harbor and under the shelter of the fortresses of Havana. It is thus, and thus only, that a nation so treacherous and so false, should be dealt with.

Within a few days, the Crescent City, another American steamer, bound from New York for Chagres, arrived at Havana, where, under existing treaties, she had a right to touch; but, although it was blowing a gale at the time, she was met outside the harbor, driven off and compelled to proceed in an opposite direction six hundred miles to New Orleans, where her passengers and mails for Havana were landed. Why this enormous violation of private rights and gross National affront? Simply and solely, because on board of that steamer was a Mr. Smith, who, it was charged, though denied, had in the exercise of his constitutional rights as an American citizen, written and published in the journals of New York, certain reflections upon the brutal and sanguinary career of the Spanish authorities in Cuba. In that “ever faithful Island,” you know men are garroted for speaking the truth, and this is an attempt to enforce the same code, in a modified form, in the United States, by muzzling the free press of this country.

Very recently, too, the American barque Cornelia, while at anchor in the port of Havana, was boarded by Spanish officers, her mail seized, opened, and rifled, the desk of the Captain forced, and he himself dragged a prisoner upon the shore. For this, as for all the other wrongs proceeding from the same quarter, there was not the shadow of provocation.

Thus, from month to month, with every circumstance of indignity, are the government and people of this country, insulted by the very basest of the Nations—a nation “born in rapine, and baptized in blood,” with no passions, save an infernal lust of gold, and thirst for human carnage, and knowing no principle of subordination, save the grovelling instincts of the craven and the slave. Yet none of these things move at all, the shrivelled and frozen soul of the present Whig Administration—no more than they would the sensibilities of a mummy, whose spirit went to

sleep three thousand years ago, and of which naught but the pitchy cerements and grinning skeleton remain. Why are these things so? We hear of no such injuries being inflicted upon the commerce and seamen of other nations. Whence then is it, that all the shots fired and all the oppressions suffered upon the Seas, are fated to reach American ships and American sailors? I will tell you why. It is because—and I feel that as an American citizen, I could lay my face in the dust for very shame and humiliation while I speak it—it is because, so timid and cowering has been the foreign policy of this government for years gone by, that in the estimation of other Nations, we are rapidly approaching that deplorable state, in which individuals are to be found in almost every community, who, having lost all character for courage and self-respect, are no longer insulted by the brave and the bullying only, but lily-livered cowards, timid though they be as hares, are found buffeting and spitting upon them! The arm of the unterrified Democracy alone, is strong and bold enough, to snatch our beloved country, from the depths of this degradation.—And be assured, that if in the vindication of National honor, or in the fulfillment of its high destiny, that Democracy shall be called upon to plant our standard upon the soil of Cuba and unfurl the stars and stripes upon the balmy breezes of the Southern Seas, England, France, Spain, and all the rest may bluster and bully as they will, but our glorious constellation, there once unrolled, shall never grow dim, but with each returning day and year, will wax brighter and brighter, until each star shall blaze as a Sun, over the startled empire of despotism, that now broods as an incubus of perdition over those beautiful lands.

I object, lastly to the Whigs, their total want of sympathy with foreigners,—* not with foreign governments, nor with the titled and prosperous ranks of foreign society, but with those masses whose bitter lot it is to sow and reap not, and who stand every where in the presence of their Rulers, as “the sheep before her shearers.” This want of sympathy, was fully manifested by the passage of the Alien and Sedition laws, by the instructions to the Commander of our Mediterranean Squadron, on which I have commented, is daily and hourly manifested in the bearing of American officials abroad, and General Scott spoke from the depths of a Whig heart, when he wrote his celebrated letter against the Naturalization of foreigners. It is true, that since his name has been mentioned in connection with the Presidency, the expression of his views on this point, has undergone a change. In the resolution on this subject, as found in the Whig platform, there is a mathematical precision, an iciness of detail, and a surgical *sang froid*, which, I confess, chill within me. The Whigs seem, as if with the very point of the dissecting knife itself, they would pick out, grain by grain, every seed of hope, yet left in the bruised but still palpitating hearts of European patriots. How does all this contrast with the letter of Gen.

*To this, there are exceptions, at the head of which must be ranked the brilliant organ of the Whig party in the South West—The Louisville Journal.

Pierce, addressed to a committee, inviting him on behalf of the citizens of Philadelphia, to join them in the celebration of the 4th of July past? He says: "It is pleasant and profitable to dwell on the associations connected with the revolutionary era, and especially is it *just to remember, that the breezes, which then swept across the Atlantic, brought us, not merely empty professions of sympathy, but treasure to support, and bold arms to strike in our behalf.*" It was nobly and gracefully said; and when I throw my eye back upon that eventful period of our history, when this nation, then a feeble colony crossed swords with the Mistress of the Seas in support of human rights, and behold such men as Montgomery, Steuben, De Kalb, Kosciusko, and La Fayette, "quitting their own" to stand on ours, to them "a foreign soil," and not merely to stand on it, but to water it with their blood in our defence, I can have no sympathy with, and but little respect for the framers of that resolution.

It is not to us as men or as Americans, that Crowned heads and Princes have and will continue to offer indignities, but it is the popular institutions under which we live, that they seek thus to stigmatise and to weaken. In the penal code of Kings, republicans are felons; shall the tameness of our submission enable them to add, that they are cowards also? It is the mission of this Republic, to vindicate the truth, the respectability, the moral grandeur of the Republican principle, in the face of its foes.—As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so did our fathers lift up that great principle, high above palaces and thrones, for the healing of the nations; and if, with folded arms and sealed lips, we now see the National law, by worse than Vandal feet, trodden down, and the pale-faced, suffering multitudes who *would* turn to that uplifted principle that they might live, stricken by tyrant hands to the dust, we are false to the solemn trust bequeathed by the past, false to duty, to glory, to nature and to nature's God.

Fellow-citizens, I oppose the election of General Scott, *first*, because he is a Whig and boasts that he has ever been so; and *secondly*, because he is a military chieftain, in the strongest acceptance of that term. He has never held a civil office. For more than forty years, he has been attached to the army, and is, at this moment, at its head. For thirty of those years, profound peace prevailed in the Republic, yet, during all this period, none of the professions or avocations of civil life, had for him any fascination. He clung to his sword and his epaulettes—thus showing, that he was a soldier from choice, and that his spirit found in the military camp, at once the nutriment of its strength and the theatre of its highest gratifications. But say our Whig friends, did not the Democrats elect General Jackson to the Presidency, and what was he but a military chieftain? I answer that he was much more. At the call of his country, he led her armies to battle and to victory, but when "grim visaged war had smoothed his wrinkled front," he returned again to the peaceful pursuits of private life. He was a lawyer by profession, a profound jurist, and distinguished as such, on the bench of the Supreme Court of his adopted State. He was a statesman of varied experience, and of

matured, far-reaching views, and as such was known upon the floor of the Senate of the United States. From the records of history, and the grateful remembrance which his countrymen cherish of his services, you learn that he was a military chieftain; but look at him as he enters the lists of rival Candidates for the Presidency. There is no sword at his side, no plume upon his brow,—he has thrown all these trappings aside, and comes forth to receive the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, unheralded by picture books, and songs of "Hail to the Chief" who in triumph advances," simply and unostentatiously, as Cincinnatus came from his plough;—not so, I am grieved to observe, with the hero of Lundy's Lane.

It will be conceded, I presume, that not merely a statesman, but one of pre-eminent ability, and of thorough acquaintance with the civil departments of the government, is required to fill with success and honor, the Presidential chair. Now, although poets are said to be born such, statesmen are not; they are made—made by toil and study, by much observation and prolonged experience in public affairs—made in the Cabinet and in the Halls of Legislation, not in the military camp. For it may be safely asserted, that the military camp has in all times been the nursery of licentiousness, of arrogance, and of lawless ambition; and although many statesmen have passed that ordeal of fiery temptations unscathed, no statesman's habits of thought or of action, were ever fashioned there.—Such seems to be the nature of man, that habits of command, continued for more than forty years, beget, almost necessarily, a haughty, imperious and insubordinate temper. But this would ill become the statesman of any country, and most especially, the statesman, who should preside over this republic, and be charged with the maintenance of its constitution. He should be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of that Constitution, which is the spirit of conciliation and of compromise.—How much of this is found in the life of General Scott, let his well known history answer. Mr. Clay, once exclaimed, "give us war, pestilence or famine, in preference to a blind and heedless enthusiasm for mere military renown," and he refused his support to General Taylor, because, as he says in his letter of 20th Sept., 1848, he was "exclusively a military man, without the least experience in civil affairs."

But I will now read you an extract from the speech of a distinguished Whig orator, (Judge Johnston,) delivered at the late Niagara Celebration: "He hoped," says the Reporter, "that the whigs would lose no time, but go to work manfully for the success of the Whig Party. He reviewed Scott's life, and compared it with the military heroes and rulers of the Bible, from Moses and Saul, declaring, *there was ground for the religious principle in the world, that the man who takes life in battle, and sheds blood for his countrymen, SHALL RULE OVER THEM.* He referred to Washington, Jackson, Harrison and Taylor, as instances of this principle.

This is taking a bolder position than has ever been assumed by the Kings and Princes of Europe. They do, in point of fact, rule their subjects by the force of arms, but they have not the indecency,

openly to say so—they claim to govern them *by the grace of God*. But here the Presidency is distinctly demanded for General Scott, upon the “religious principle,” that he has won it by the sword!

Turning away, however, from all argument and from the opinions of statesmen living or dead, upon the question, let us look for a moment into the past, for the fruits of the military career. I enrol before you the volume of Universal History, and what are its teachings? Who destroyed the Republic of ancient Rome? A military chieftain? Who overthrew the Republics of ancient Greece, enslaving that chivalric and noble people, and desolating their fair and classic lands? A military chieftain? Who swept away, as with a besom, the Republic of England, the only one which has ever taken root in the soil of our forefathers? A military chieftain—the treacherous and godless General Monk! Who sapped the foundations of the Republic of France, and ultimately crushed it as an egg shell in his iron hand? A military chieftain! And who are they, that from year to year, and from month to month, are carving with clotted swords, their way to every seat of power in the convulsed and degraded republics of South America? Military chieftains! Yes, fellow-citizens, if you will go back into the cemetery of nations, and walk there amid the tombs of all the governments which have flourished and fallen before us, you will find that the sepulchres of the republics that have gone by, will strike your pained vision, as do the graves of the little children in our church yards. Some are scarce a span long—they seem to have perished in the first breath of their being. Others have struggled on, in convulsions and in blood, a few years longer, but how few, alas! how few, have reached the glorious meridian of manhood! And over all these sepulchres, is inscribed the same mournful epitaph: “Died of the sword,” “Died of the sword”—of that sword, which Judge Johnston, embodying the sentiment of the Whig party, has told us has been destined from the days of Moses and Saul to those of General Taylor, to rule mankind. Ah, is it not time, that mankind thus long ruled by iron and by steel, had risen in their might and shaken off their bondage? Is it sadly true, that in this matter and in this only, the chemistry of human experience is fated, never, never, to extract wisdom from the past? Why is it, that in the nineteenth century, when the human intellect is exploring, as on the wings of the morning, the remotest departments of knowledge, when the arcana of the Universe, hitherto undreamed of, are at every point unveiling themselves to the wooings of Philosophy, and when the wondrous problem of human existence, in all things else, is being wrought out with such sublime results—why is it, that human intelligence and human fortune are doomed to remain stationary, in all that concerns government—in all that concerns political organization—matters confessedly so vital to the dignity and to the happiness of our race? Is it indeed true, that, in the midst of the light which flashes upon us from the troubled and sanguinary drama of the South American republics, and in contempt of the voice of warning that comes up to us from the tombs of more than fifty centuries—centuries whose inhabitants have lived and died in slavery and in sorrow—is it true, that in despite

of all this, we are but children still, and that the nodding plume, the gleaming scimitar, and the “pride, pomp and circumstance of war,” have still power to dazzle our worse than infantile vision, and hurry us on, as were hurried the nations of old, blindly and heedlessly, behind the chariot wheels of every Military Conqueror? If so, then indeed have our fathers lived in vain; in vain, we ourselves do live; in vain “day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge,” to our dull and unheeding ears!

But, respond our Whig friends, we have elected General Harrison, a military chieftain, to the Presidency, and again we have elected General Taylor, a soldier without the slightest acquaintance with the duties of civil life, and still the Republic stands firmly upon its foundations. True, but happily these foundations were laid so deeply by our fathers, that the “rains must descend, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat” long upon them, before the noble superstructure will be seen to totter. Again, it must not be forgotten, that in the dispensations of Providence, deemed by some a special intervention, both of these public servants were removed from the theatre of their earthly labors and responsibilities, soon after their election. But the evil has begun, and now, at the threshold, is the time for the wise and for the good, to resist it. Go to your dark rolling Mississippi, whose rushing floods, a world would scarce suffice to stay, and trace upward its resistless currents. As you ascend, league by league, the stream grows narrower and narrower, less and less deep and less turbid in its waters, and so you go onward and upward, through many a long and winding valley, and athwart many a lofty range of hills, until at length, the stream, ever dwindling, has shrunk now to a petty creek, and now a rivulet, and now a trickling rill, bubbling up before you, from some mountain side, a sparkling little fountain—tranquil and gentle, a very sylvan gem, in which forest leaves and forest flowers, bathe and mirror themselves. Such is the origin and such is the progress of the mighty Mississippi—such is the beginning and such the onward and downward career of evil—such is the commencement and such the formation of the habits of men and of nations. It is the part of wisdom and of patriotism, as I have already intimated, to resist the beginnings of evil, nor wait as doth the fool, until our hands and feet shall be trammelled, when resistance would be vain. Combat then, I would say to the American people, at every point and by every means, the introduction of a principle into your politics, which, if all the voices of the past be not false, must, in the end, be fatal to the public liberties. Much evil has already been done, by the election of the chieftains referred to. We are rapidly rendering ourselves insensible to those sentiments, which used to move upon us with electric power—we are approaching that state of stupor and of deadness, in which the people of South America are found, and like them, it is to be feared, we shall come in time, to regard the Presidency as a prize, which may be legitimately won by the sword. Such, as I have shown you, was the distinct teaching of one of the Whig orators, at the Niagara celebration. Much evil, has moreover, been thus done, in discouraging the hopeful friends of free-

dom in other lands. They are perplexed with doubts and difficulties, in regard to this question of self-government, to which we, happily, are strangers. They look to our example and continued existence as a republic, as at once their vindication and their beacon light. But when they cast their eyes over the sea of time, there rises up before them, a rock, towering in height, rugged, precipitous and grim with its utter blackness—a rock whose base the billow ever lasheth, and around whose summit, the storms and the lightnings ever play. It is the rock of MILITARY POWER; and about that rock, for many a weary league, are gathered the wrecks and fragments of every free government on which the sun has risen. When therefore they behold our vessel of state, charged with the destinies of this republic, with all sails spread, bearing right down on this rock, they tremble and are filled with dismay. And on the other hand, be assured, that if to the examples cited, be added the election of General Scott, from the palaces of St. Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, Naples and Madrid, the jewelled finger of regal scorn will be pointed at us, with the exclamation, "Behold the Model Republic, professing to be governed by great fundamental PRINCIPLES, already drunken with enthusiasm for military renown! Behold her, going the way of all the republics of the earth, casting herself, her creed, her traditions and her glory, beneath the Juggernaut car of the Military Conqueror!" Many and many may be the centuries which shall pass over this green earth, before these words of scoffing shall fall on the aching heart of the American Democracy!

Can it be possible, that the American people will deliberately swallow a deadly poison, merely because they are young and vigorous, and can resist for a long time, its certainly pernicious influences? Will they imitate the tormentors of the old world, who stretch their victims on the rack, and as the machine turns, and joint after joint is heard to crack and to dislocate, the surgeon stands by the side of the sufferer, and feeling his pulse, reports how much more he can endure and live? Shall we thus deal with our institutions? Shall we stretch them upon the rack of torturing and fearfully perilous experiments, and shall our own solicitude, and our only enquiry be, how much more they can bear and not be overthrown?

Let no man charge me with being the enemy of Gen. Scott, or with desiring, in any degree, to sully his hard-earned fame. To him, as to all who have served their country well, be every honor given, compatible with that country's safety. But candour obliges me to say, that I would rather this nation's treasury should be exhausted and thrown in one dazzling heap at his feet; rather that monuments should be reared to him, whose summits should mingle with the skies; rather that at his coming, cities and States should rise up and call him blessed, and one loud acclaim ascend in his praise, from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific—rather, infinitely rather, that all this wealth, and honor and adulation should be lavished upon him, than that he should be elevated to the Chief Magistracy of the Republic, for whose duties he is so utterly disqualified, and thus establish a precedent, fraught with interminable evil

to us, and chilling with despondency, the friends of human rights throughout the world.

At stated periods of the year, you are accustomed to listen to eloquent discourses, setting forth the inestimable value of our institutions and of the freedom which they secure; yet, there is reason to believe, that we reflect but too little upon these things, and have, at no time, a sufficiently hearty and exalted appreciation of the privileges which we enjoy. It is not for the robust to know the value of health, but for him who languisheth upon a bed of disease. The demon of practical oppression has never crossed *your* pathway—you have never felt his icy and withering gripe. With you, human despotism, is but a nursery tale. Its grim and phantom form may have served to amuse or startle your childhood's hours, and around your fireside of a winter's night, the story of its atrocities may, many a time, have stirred your manly spirits to indignation; but most of you, have never been in those foreign lands, where this story is so livingly and fearfully realized. You have not entered the dungeons of Europe, and beheld them crowded with patriots, whose only crime is, that they loved the land that gave them birth, better than the tyrants that despoiled it. You have never been on board of those prison-ships, which from time to time, leave European shores, transporting these patriots by multitudes, a thousand leagues across the sea, and casting them upon inhospitable coasts, where, far from kindred and country, in poverty and brokenness of heart, they lay themselves down to die. You have never examined those instruments of torture, to be found in the prisons of the old world, and still but too often used, on which every arm that strikes a blow for human rights, is liable to be wrung and broken.—You have not walked through European capitals, and seen them filled with the spies of the Government, pursuing your footsteps to every place of business and of pleasure, noting your minutest actions and catching with greedy ears, the breathings of your most secret thoughts. If you had looked upon this picture, you might have some appreciation of your own political blessings, and of what, unhappily, other nations are deprived. But you may learn something of the value of these blessings, by what they cost—the blood of, as I verily believe, the noblest band of martyrs that ever drew a sword or put their trust in the God of battles.—It was not gold or silver or precious stones that bought them—they are altogether above the price of the treasure that perisheth. Could the inhabitants of Spain, of Italy, of Austria and of Russia, coin your California mines into one great offering, and lay it humbly at the feet of their Kings and Princes, they could not purchase from them, one free press, nor could they, with all that gold, buy the privilege of holding one such public meeting as we hold here to-night. You may estimate the worth of these blessings also, by what the good and the truly great of all climes and ages, have been willing to pay for them. Open again the volume of History, and you will find, that in pursuit of these blessings, which, though precious above rubies, you enjoy as the common air, the patriotic and philanthropic, the true lovers of their land and of their race, have ever been ready to

sacrifice their time, their toil and their fortune; for them, they have submitted to wander in exile, the victims of remorseless persecution, homeless and friendless; they have lived in the caves of the earth, and in the gorges of the mountains; they have defied chains and prisons and racks and the curling flames of the stake, and from age to age, in uncounted millions, have poured out their blood like water, and bleached with their bones a thousand battlefields. And yet, these blessings, they have not had! You have them, but you have them, if I may be allowed the use of the hallowed metaphor, "in earthen vessels." You have them in institutions partaking of the frailty which belongs to all that is of earth—institutions fated at every moment of their precarious existence, to find in the selfishness and guilty ambition of the human heart, enemies that never slumber, that never grow weary.

Let the Democracy then be vigilant, strong in faith, resolute in purpose. Let them not, under a momentary impulse of gratitude or of admiration for military renown, plant a tree, which, though slow in growth, it may be, must bring forth fruit, evil and altogether evil. The acorn has germinated, but is still beneath the heel of the American people, and may be crushed; if nurtured by their folly and the folly of their descendants, a century hence, it may be an oak whose knarled trunk and spreading branches, will mock at the tempest! This truly appalling military power, now presents itself to us, clothed with its most intoxicating witcheries. But we know not, fellow-citizens, we know not, what we worship. The Prophet of Khorassan wears, as yet, for us, his glittering veil; and may that God who led our fathers through the paths of the revolution, grant, in his infinite mercy, that this nation may never be called to stand, stricken and cowering, beneath the terrific glances of that power, when the veil, which now shrouds its frightful form and features, shall have been torn away forever.

Our Whig friends often ask us, how is it possible that we can be enthusiastic in the support of such a man as Gen. Pierce, and they really seem to entertain a most amiable apprehension, lest we should get into a towering excitement about, what they profess to regard as very small matters, and thus render ourselves ridiculous! I must confess, that I believe them sincere, in the surprise which they express, at the tides of Democratic feeling that are swelling around them, and that they are altogether unable to explain this state of things. In Whig principles, it is lamentably true, that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to excite human enthusiasm. It is a creed, whose dwelling place is within the arctic circle of the moral world. Hence, its votaries have been driven to rely on Tippecanoe and the Thames, log cabins, hard cider, "coons," skinned and unskinned, Monterey, Buena Vista and Cerro Gordo. These are the themes over which Whig orators grow eloquent, in glorification of which Whig poets sing, and in the contemplation and discussion of which, the Whig masses endeavor to persuade themselves that they enjoy a species of elation, which they call enthusiasm. Now, although, in the stainless public and private life of Gen. Pierce, in the inflexibility and loyalty, with which he has devoted himself to the constitu-

tion and the Union, and in his eminent civil and military services, there is much and quite enough, to move us to ardour in his support, yet, none of these things mingle at all, as an element, in that volume of excitement, which is sweeping over the land, as a conflagration borne on the wings of the hurricane, sweeps over the prairies of the West. No, fellow-citizens; it is the Democratic creed, which is the electric battery, that is sending the thrill of its inspirations along every nerve of the National Democratic heart. It is altogether natural that it should be so; indeed, it could not be otherwise. For he who studies and understands your principles, who appreciates them and dwells, as it were, in their midst, whose soul is steeped in those principles, it is just as natural that that soul should glow with enthusiasm, as that the edges of the storm cloud, should glow and flash with the lightnings which are sleeping in its bosom. Yes, he who examines the Democratic faith, in all its length and breadth and depth, who comprehends its all pervading philanthropic sympathies, its supreme triumph over the hoary-headed errors of the past, the grandeur with which it seeks to clothe the character of man, and catches those visions of glory with which, in prophetic spirit, it sweeps the horizon of the future—to expect that he, surrendered up to inspirations like these, should be without enthusiasm, is to expect that he could stand upon the Table Rock, and be unmoved, amid the dashing cataracts and pealing thunders of Niagara. We are enthusiastic, and right well do we know, 'the reason of the hope that is within us,' and whence springeth the fire that kindles our spirits. Let us not then be alarmed or ashamed, at the jeerings of our Whig friends. With their cause, with their practices, we have nothing, we desire to have nothing in common. We are emphatically "children of the day," and upon the waving folds of our banner, is pencilled in letters of sunshine, the enchanted word, which is stirring the moral world to its deepest foundations—that word is PROGRESS. Let us not seek then, to chill ourselves down to the temperature of those, who, worshipping the past and living for the present, shrink, like children in the dark, from every hand, as spectral and boding, that would break the seals which lock from us, the teeming fountains of the future. The effort would be vain; for Whigery is, at best, but a sluggish stream, which makes its way onward, struggling and slow, amid the deep valleys—now looking up tremblingly to the sun, and now hiding itself stealthily beneath the soil—but Democracy is an Alpine torrent, which, wild with its own native freshness and vigor, is ever leaping from precipice to precipice, fascinating the world with the music of its roar, and dazzling it by the rainbows which overarch its pathway. Such is our cause, about which come thronging all that is enkindling in human hope and all that is grand in this earth's patriotism and philanthropy. In it, we do and well may glory. To it, we may give, not merely our profoundest convictions, but our labor, our fortunes, our love. In its behalf, we may, without a blush, indulge the gushings of the wildest enthusiasm, and before the world, clap our hands for very joy, in anticipation of its victories.

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